

Application No. 09/873,737

AMENDMENT TO THE CLAIMS

Claims 1-98 (cancelled)

Claim 99 (previously presented): An isolated and purified polynucleic acid encoding a biologically active *piwi* family polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence as set forth in any of SEQ ID NOs: 2, 4 and 6.

Claim 100 (previously presented): The polynucleic acid of claim 99, further comprising a *piwi* family-encoding polynucleic acid sequence as set forth in any of SEQ ID NOs: 1, 3 and 5.

Claim 101 (previously presented): An isolated and purified polynucleic acid encoding a biologically active *piwi* family polypeptide, wherein the polynucleic acid is at least about 75% identical to a sequence as set forth in any of SEQ ID NOS: 1, 3, and 5, and wherein the polypeptide comprises the PIWI box.

Claim 102 (previously presented): The polynucleic acid of Claim 101, wherein the encoded polypeptide comprises a vertebrate *piwi* family polypeptide.

Claim 103 (previously presented): The polynucleic acid of Claim 101, wherein the encoded polypeptide comprises a mammalian *piwi* family polypeptide.

Claim 104 (previously presented): The polynucleic acid of claim 101, wherein the encoded polypeptide comprises a human *piwi* family polypeptide.

Claim 105 (previously presented): The polynucleic acid of claim 101, further defined as a DNA segment.